

THE
GLORY AND
Happines of a true
CHRISTIAN.

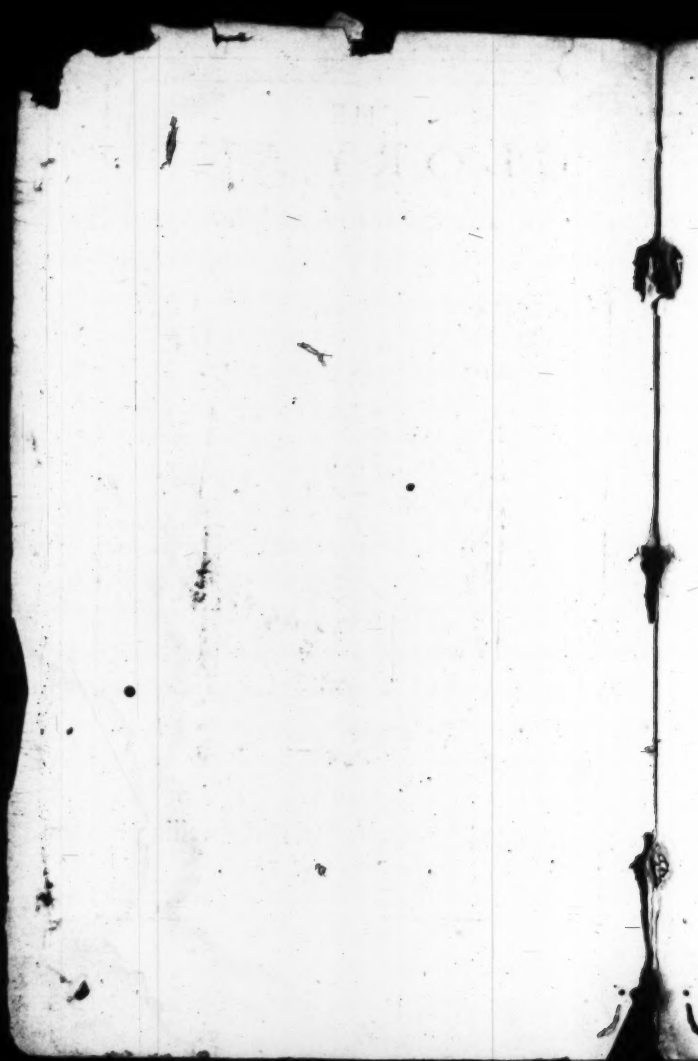
A SERMON PREACHED BY
Master Rogers at Needham in
Norfolke the 28 of Iune. 1617.



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XUM

THE

GLORY AND HAPPINES of a true Christian.

Reuelation: 3. verse: 4.

Notwithstanding thou hast a few
names yet in Sardis, which haue not
defiled their garments, and they shall
walke with me in white: &c.



In this Booke there is a
description of the state of
the Church, First, as it
was present when *Iohn*
writt this Booke of the *Reuelation*:
and this is in the three first Chapters
set forth together with a description
of *Christ* that reuealed this. The first
is a prophetickall prediction or des-
cription of the state of the Church
as it should be from that time euen
vnto the end of the world.

The Lord *Iesus* appearing vnto
Iohn in the Ile *Patmos*, did command
him to write seuen Epistles vnto the
seuen Churches in *Asia*: and here in
the begining of this third Chapter

A 2

he

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he is commaunded to write vnto the
Angell of the Church of *Sardie*; and
this Epistle being the first in order
reacheth from the first verse to the
eighth verse. In which obserue a com-
maundement giuen to write: In the
Epistle there be three things to be
noted. The preface or entrance into
the same, wherein *Christ* himselfe is
described by certaine roialties. The
matter or substance of the Epistle.
The Conclusion thereof. *Verses. 5. 6.*

ver. 1. 2. 3.

In the preface there be two great roy-
alties giuen to *Christ*, the first, that he
had the seuen spirits of God. The se-
cond, that he held the seuen starres,
and this was a fit Preface for the mat-
ter ensuing, for by hauing the seuen
spirits of God, is to be vnderstood,
that he hath the manifold graces of
the spirit; and it was meete this
drowfie Church of *Sardie* should take
knowdge thereof; that had formerly
so ill husbanded the graces of God
which they had receiued, that they
were

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were in a manner lost, to the end they might know when they might restore them againe. And secondly hee is said to haue the seuen starres in his hand. as in the first Chapter, 26. 20. verses, which stars are the Ministers of the Churches, whome *Christ* useth as his instruments & tooles to worke withall, yea he hath them so, that he can punnish them if they become vnfaithfull.

Touching the matter or substance of the Epistle, it containeth a reprehension of the Minister and people of *Sardie*; for that hauing formerly receiued some grace and life from God, they were growen to that passe that *Christ* accounted them little better then starke dead: First, telling them, I know thy workes, that is, thy deadnesse in Gods seruice. Now little ioy might they haue that *Christ* knoweth this by them, that they were no better

And sonow many a man may take

A 3

little

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little ioy to remember that *Christ* knoweth his workes; he being a Blasphe-mer, a Sabbath-breaker, a drunkard, or a worldling &c. And little ioy let them haue for me till they be ashamed of these their workes, and till they goe to make complaint to God against themselues for their sinnes, and seeke to haue their euill conuersation reformed.

As for the Church of *Smirna* mentioned in the second chapter and verse.9. that had a name to be poore, but indeed was rich, it might be a ioy to it that *Christ* knew their works: for though they were reproched and accounted to be Hypocrites, yet sith they did endeauour to walke Godly though in much weakenesse; yet this is their comfort, that *Christ* knoweth them, and also loueth and alloweth of them, though wicked men doe both scorne and hate them.

This Church of *Sardie* is reprov-
ed for that they had a name to be allue,
but

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but yet were dead: Euen as *Paul* saith, 1. Cor. 3.
That he could not write vnto them as spirituall, but as carnall, for that they were more carnall then spirituall. So as this Church of *Sardie* languishing and decaying in grace.

After this reprehension in the second verse, he shewed them thereby how to recouer themselves from this their euill estate, and that is, by *Awaking*. Secondly, by watching and prouoking themselves to greater zeale in Gods seruice. Other- verse. 2.
wise, *He will come suddenly as a theife vpon them*, and that in such a sort, that they would be loath, and also to their cost vnlesse they repent. verse. 4.

The Second part of the matter or substance of the Epistle is a commendation of the better sort of *Christians* in this Church, which is in the fourth verse. For he saith *yet thou hast a fewe names in Sardie that had not defiled their garments*, as hard as the world goeth. And though he could tell them by

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name (they were but few) yet he knew them, and how they had *not defiled their garments*, but had held out in a Godly and zealous course of religion answerable to their profession. Now vnto these he maketh a promise in the next word, *that they shall walke with him in white*, that is, in glorie and happinesse, *for they are worthy*, that is, in his account, in regard of the righteousnesse of *Christ*.

Now of this verse I would speake at this time, but yet because I am a man that peraduenture shall speake to you but once in my life time; yet my intent and desire is to speake vnto all sorts of professors here present, for as it was in *Sardie*, so I suppose it is in this assembly, that there are some that walke godly, yet there be many moe that haue either a name to liue, and yet are dead, or else dying.

Heere be then three sorts of persons to be spoken of: and first of those who onely haue a name to liue,
that

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that is, an opinion in themselves, and so may be in some others, (as ignorant as themselves) that they be alive, yet in truth are dead, yea stone dead.

The second sort are such as having received and had some graces of the spirit heeretofore, they are now decayed in grace, and those are heere called a company of dead ones: these were not quite dead, for *Christ* doth bid them afterward *to awake and strengthen themselves in the things that were readie to die*; they had some graces decayed, and some languishing and dying in them.

verse. 2.

The Third sort of persons heere mentioned were such as hold vp their holy profession with a godly conversation. The first sort were dead Christians. The second cold Christians; and the third sort were godly & zealous Christians. And everie one of vs here present are one of these three sorts of persons. The first sort be in a
dam-

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damnable state & condition, yet these make the greatest shew, and of it be the greatest multitude. The second sort are entred into a drowisie course and they be dying, but not dead: and being growen cold in religion and fallen from their first loue, these be in a dangerous case, and such the Lord will whippe and scourge, and by one meanes or other to driue home these stragling Christians.

The third sort are happie and blessed, euen such as haue not *defiled their garments*, such shalbe with *Christ* in white, that is in glory heereafter, *for they are worthy.*

Oh that I had an heart and tongue that I might so speake and you so heare; that such of you that be naught become good, and those that be decayed and cold, may become better.

Touching the first sort of men to be spoken of; they haue a name to liue, but indeede are starke deade, that is, they boast and bragge that they

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they haue that which they haue not, and are that which they are not, such wee haue now, and such were in the Prophet *Esaie* his time, there were many that complained that they had fasted, and that they had sacrificed to him, but it was not regarded. But they were told by him that they had *fasted to strife &c.* & their sacrifice was as much esteemed of God as if they had cut of a doggs necke. So likewise in *Jeremie* they did much boast of the temple of the Lord, and of their seruice done there, but yet saith the Prophet, *will ye lie, steale, Murther, commit adultery, sweare, & yet stand before the Lord in his house.* Also Iohn Baptist, he told such as boasted that *Abraham was their father, that they were a generation of Vipers.* And our Saviour told thole that bragged they were free borne and *Abraham his sonnes, that they were of their father the diuell,* for his workes they did, and did so much resemble him in their cōditions, & were so like him

*Esa. 52.
verse 3.
verse. 4.*

*Ier. 7.
verse. 58.
9. & 20.*

*Mat. 3.
Ioh. 8. v. 44*

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Reue. 371

him, as if they had beene spued out of his mouth. So likewise the Church of *Laodicea* did boast that *shee was rich and needed nothing, yet they were wretched, miserable, poore, blinde and naked.* They deceiued their owne hearts through pride and ignorance as many others doe, saying, they were rich, and did not knowe indeede they were poore. Now besides these, the diuell he commeth & tels such kinde of pertons that their state and case is well inough, and would perswade some of the forwarde sort, that their condition is starke nought.

2. Cor. 15.

[Jam. 1. 16.

But be not deceiued *for flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdome of God.* Againe, be not deceiued, *for no fornicator &c.* 2 Cor. 6. 9. Againe, Be not deceiued, saith *James the Apostle, in seeming to be religious, and yet canst not refraine thy tongue, this man his religion is in vaine.* So I say, be not deceiued, for though a man refraine many sinnes, and yet retaine
one

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one knowne sinne which he is loath to forsake, that man cannot be saued, till hee hath repented of it also.

But now to come to particulars: there be diuers sorts of men that haue a name to liue, who in truth are but dead.

The first sort, are ignorant persons that want knowledg of God, and of religion: and of this kinde are many of the poorer sort, but yet you shall neuer heare them complaine of this their wretched estate, but will rather say they hope to be saued. But how? euen by their good meaning, and good prayers, and good seruing of God &c. These men in their owne account are fish whole.

The second sort, are such as liue in some grosse sinnes as Swearing, Lying, Cursing and banning, Drunkenesse and Vncleannesse, Pride, Vsury and Couetuousnesse, and such like damnable sinnes: yet they thinke their estate good enough, but if they
be

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be rebuked for their sinnes, and told of Gods condemning of them, then they hope they be not so great sinners but God can pardon them, and doe make account to dispatch all in the end with a Lord haue mercie vpon mee.

The third sort of dead persons, are the worldlings, and such as doe nothing else but busie themselves in worldly busines, not respecting religion: These men are like vnto *Moles* that run in the earth, and are cunning to know euery mule in the ground, but if they be taken out of it they are at their wits end: and they be also like vnto fishes when they are taken out of the water.

The fourth sort, bee ciuill men, who hauing some restraining grace doe liue in a ciuill manner among men, abstaining from common grosse sinnes, which are breaches of the second table, and can say with the old phrase, I thanke God I am not as
other

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ther men. But yet these men make no conscience to performe the duties of the first Table, and yet are taken among their neighbours to be very honest men, but yet for hearing of the word, praying with their families they care not. Notwithstanding such men doe not thinke that they haue any neede of *Christ*, and indeed *Christ* hath no neede of them. Now such miserable persons which thinke a ciuill life can bring them to heauen although ignorant of the grounds of religion; these men are in a miserable condition, howsoeuer their neighbours haue dubbed them to be faire conditioned men, yet they are farre of as yet from the state of saluation, yea *Many Publicans and sinners may goe to heauen before them.*

Mat. 21.31

The fifth sort of dead Christians, are such as though they doe heare the word of God diligently, and thereby get knowledge, and make much of their ministers, yea, are a-
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ble sometime to beare checks for their profession of the Gospell, yet bee like the thorny ground, and doe retaine some vile sinne, as Pride, Vncleannesse, Coueruousnesse &c. They beinge neuer truely humbled, and not hauing the gift of sauing faith, such men may fall away from their former profession, some sooner and some later, and may be without true sauing grace to doe them any good.

All these five sorts before described shall not be seuered in their seuerall estates as sure as the Lord is in heauen, and why, because they are all borne dead in trespasses and sins, and vntill they be ioyned to Christ (who is the fountaine of spirituall life for there is no life but in him) they be starke dead euen as the diuell, sauing onely their possibilitie to be saued: Thou art as a Toad, yea, as a rotten carrion, and till thou hast true faith, thou art starke deade.

Many

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Many haue common gifts, others knowledge, which may afterwards proue pe rsecutors and fall away I can tell thee, thou wert once dead, now if thou canst tell me when thou wert made aliue: If thou canst truly say thou liuest the life of grace, and art dead to sinne, and not in sinne, then being dead, aliue; take heede this life of grace doe not decay in thee; nor goe out like a Candle; then shalt thou goe to heauen as sure as God is in heauen.

Thou Ignorant man; prophane worldling, ciuill person, or Hypocrite; thou not hauing true faith and the spirit of sanctification, learne to know as yet thou art in the state of damnation, and if thou dyest in this condition, thou must goe from this first death to the second death, which is endlesse. Now when you haue taken these fiue sorts of dead Christians out of your congregations, I can tell you there will be but a few left

B

behinde.

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Cor. 13.
5.

behinde. But some man may say, why doe you thus search into vs of our estates and of the danger of them? Why, because wee must fanne the chaffe from the wheate: And Paule doth bid you try and proue your selues whether you be in the faith or no, and if yee be not in the faith, yee are no better then Reprobates, for ought as yet yee know, or wee either. But wee see among men how much the backe and the belly is cared for, as for the poore soule that is little cared for. Wee are combred about many things, but few are carefull for that one needfull thing, the reason is, for few are elected.

Ioh. 5. 25.

Such as come to heare Gods word should pray that the Lord would raise them from the death of sinne, for man nor Angell cannot doe it. In the 5 of Iohn, *The dead shall heare the voyce of the Sonne of God and they that heare it shall liue.* There be many which liue in the visibie Church which

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which shall be damned. Desire that thou which art dead in the graue of sinne (euen as dead as Lazarus) that the Lord would speake powerfully by his word, and call thee out of this graue. Seeke for the power of sauing grace; for it is possible *that thou which wert dead, maist become alieue*, and thou that wert a Persecutor & as cruel as the layler, maist becōe humble. Thou that wert couetuous (as Zacheus) maist become liberall. Thou that art an Hypocrite & but halfe a Christian (as Agrippa maist become a whole Christiā. And why not, we all of vs once were dead, & the best of vs drawne from among such as you be. Let this then be the day of your rising, if ye liue the life of grace yee shall liue the life of glory, but if yee go on in that natural course, yee shall misse of that glorious life. And I speake it from my heart: I call heauen and earth to witnesse, yee shall be surely damned, and the greater shall your condemnation be, be-

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cause

Acts. 26.

14. 34.

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the sailor.

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cause the Ministers of God doe now
rowse you vp; and woe be to the Mi-
nisters that daube vp your conscien-
ces: If you goe on in your ignorance
prophane, ciuill, or hipocriticall cour-
ses, yee shall surely be damned, and
this that is spoken this day shall be for
your further condemnation because
yee were fairely warned, but would
not take heede, or take a faire war-
ning.

Now touching the second sort of
Christians, namely such as had recei-
ued from the Lord sauing grace, but
they were much abated of that they
were at the first calling, or else slug-
gish: these may be said to be of the
second sorts also, whereof the first
are such as had beene very zealous and
forward, but now decayed. The se-
cond sort are those that be drowisie
Christians, and were neuer much bet-
ter, but stand at a stay.

Concerning the first sort, there
be many men that haue beene very
zealous

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zealous in the profession of the Gospel, and carefull of good things, which be now false in tempering with the world, and into much worldly businesse, and follow the fashions and courtes of worldlings, are much decayed in grace, and shamefully false from their first loue. yet this, many of these at their first calling were so forward as they could not tell how to be thankfull enough and zealous enough, but soone after they grew to be cold in zeale, and very carelesse and remisse in the practise of godlines: such men in regard of Gods vni-changeable loue cannot quite fall away from the grace they haue receiued, yet they doe shamefully dishonour God, and giue occasion of scandall and offence to others, and bring sorrow and smart to their owne soules, and great shame & reproach to themselves & to other Professors. For as a man that hath borne skot and sord (as wee say) in a towne, if he be brought

B 3

to

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to such a poore estate, as that hee is
constrayned to take almes of his neigh-
bours, it must needs be a great grieve
and shame vnto him : so is it with
these kinde of Christians, whereas
they should grow forward in the loue
of God : as the light doth increase
after the Sunne newly risen, they on
the other side grow backward, and
this must needs be grieuous vnto
God ; and it openeth the mouth of
the wicked to the reproach of their
profession ; and they will say, seeing
these forward men make a stay of their
forwardnesse in their course. what
need we set forward and be so hott
in the spirit, and they bring a slan-
der vppon the land of Canaan. Thus
many men when they were young
were very zealous in religion, and be-
ing come to temper and deale in the
world, then they make a stay of their
forwardnesse, like vnto a dogge that
at the first setting forth runneth swift-
ly after the game or chase till he meete
with

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with a peece of carrion, then he st andeth and goeth no further: And this befalleth vnto these men, either because they neglect the meanes, as prayer, hearing of the word and meditating vpon the same, if done, yet very carelesly, so that their zeale is decayed as fire goeth out for want of tending it, or putting fit matter to it to cherish it. But indeed the chiefe cause of all this decaying grace is the loue of this vild world which eateth vp all, and hindreth greatly the growth of godlinesse: Euen as a great high Ash will suffer nothing to thriue that groweth vnder it: And this commeth by reason of our plentie caused by our long peace. For euerie man almost now layeth about him how to make or feather his owne nest, and to prouide store of riches for him and his posteritie. And Christians liuing among these worldlings, they learne to doe as they doe: but if wee had warres euery three or

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fourte yeares and put in feare of the enemy, wee would then say, what should wee gather so much goods for the enemy to spoyle vs and them.

But oh what a shame is it for a man once to make heauen his chiete treasure, shall now fall to seeking so greedily after the earth. Can God take this well at our hands? No, such as doe see, are like vnto a man yet hauing a comely woman to his wife, shall forsake her, and seeke after the company of some vild blouze or base harlot. Such cold Christians may well be affrighted when they doe seriously consider what they once were, and now what they are fallen into.

Now for the second sort of Christians which need to be awaked they are such as were euill, dull, and sluggish in the practise of the duties of godlinesse, they hang as it were by the eye lids, for they hauing receiued of God a little measure of faith, and of sanctifying grace, are content to
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Of a true Christien.

ioyne with others in good things and company with some of the forwarder sort. But their seruice to God is so poore and so cold, as it is little worth, and indeed the vilde loue of the world eateth vp these two, they heare the word, but vse no meditation, good conference and hartly prayer &c.

Alas, If it were not for the world, many would be far better then they are. Many Christians are like Vrchings that grow not, they increase not in grace. Wee call such Children as doe not growe and thriue, Changelings, and so are many Christians that stand at a stay, and say they hope yet Christ dyed for them. Doe they say so? Why doe they not run on chearefully in their race, and say, what shall they render to God for their redemption? Thou art deliuered as it were from the Red Sea, and seest so many behinde thee scrambling and scawling in the same. Doth
this

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this deserue no better seruice to God and thanks? If thou hopest for saluation, is it so little a mercie that thou giuest him so cold and lazie seruice? I would saith Christ &c, The Lord lo-ueth not the lazie seruice of Christiāns, nor their cold hearing of his word, or cold praying. If wee serue him chearefully heere, we shall haue some present blessing, and a farre greater heereafter, but otherwise let vs be assured we shall finde little comfort in cold seruice.

Hitherto of the reprehension of the two former sorts of Christians, whereof the first were stone dead.

The second decayed and drow-sie ones.

Be awake or be watchfull, and strengthen the things which remaine, that are ready to dye: for I haue not found thy workes perfect before God.

After the reprehension for their deadnes and sleepines, he commeth now to shew them the remedie that they

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they may recouer their dangerous estate, which is, by bidding them *Awake, and strengthen the things that are ready to dye.* Wee know that such as cast behinde their company in a Iorney, had neede ride faster then others: And they that are cast behinde hand in the world had neede also rise earlier and worke harder then their neighbours: Euen so, these drowfie and dead harted Christiāns had neede now awake betimes, and rise sooner then they were wont, and fall harder to worke, and vse all good meanes for their good, and to recouer their estate which once they had, or should haue had: And being awaked in this sort, let them consider what it was that cast them behinde hand, and rowling vp themselues by earnest prayer, let them call to minde what was the hinderance of their zeale; whether it was the neglect of the meanes; as Prayer, hearing of the word, or else this vilde worlde: and
hauing

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having found the causes thereof let them euer after shake and cast them off.

Awake, God will not haue men that professe religion to lie snorting in sinne: Is this a time for Christians to sleepe euen in the midday of the Gospell? He that sleepeth in harvest time is the sonne of confusion. When will men be zealous for God, if not now when wee haue so many meanes to incite vs thereunto, as the preaching of the Gospell, peace in our land &c. Are not they very lazie that will lie and sleepe till ten or a leuen of the clocke? Is this a time of sleeping when the Lord doth shoote off so many warning peeces by our eares? As namely, so many strange sicknesses and diseases, fearefull fiers, and inuadations of waters, vnseasonable weather both in winter and sommer. The Lord doth not so much looke at the prophanes of the world, as at the deadnesse, coldnesse and

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and drowlinesse of Professors: This moueth him to anger, that they be no better, although by the Ministers of his word, and by his Iudgments he doth cry aloud vnto vs, yet most men are still asleepe. Awake for thame thou that now sleepest.

The Lord seeketh to rowze vs vp out of this greedy loue of the world, for why doth he else take away so many of our neighbours goods, some by fire, some by water. Hee pincheth vs of our former allowance, but not to the end wee should esteeme of this world. Our long peace hath brought in riches, and that hath eaten vp religion. Many haue a desire to be doing some good dutie, but alas it is doe very poorely. They pray, but it is very coldly and faintly. They heare the word, but without meditation, and so it becommeth as it were in a manner vnprofitable.

And strengthen the things that are ready to dye. Here is still more good counsell.

Wee

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2 Pet. 1. 5.
& 6.

Wee must strengthen then our selues in graces receiued, and grow stronger therein, then when wee first receiued them. Euen as children, the older they grow, the stronger and taller, euen so must Christians grow, stronger and taller in grace. The Apostle Peter wisheth vs to ioyne *Vertue with Faith, and with Vertue Knowledge: and with Knowledge Temperance. &c.* And the Apostle Paule also sayeth, *Couet after spirituall giftes.* 1 Corin. 14. 1. We should be couetuons after grace. As men are not content to haue a little poore Cottage to hide their heads in, and so much as may keepe them poorely to keepe life and soule together, but they are more desirous to grow more wealthy, so as they may well maintaine themselves and their familie, yea, to haue also somewhat more to releue and helpe others (if neede be) when they come vnto them: So ought Christians to grow so in graces of the spirit, as they may haue

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haue not onely sufficient for their owne store and necessitie, but also so much as may helpe to further others in godlinesse, that they may as it were keepe open house for their friends. If wee haue much grace, wee shall the more glorifie God, and draw on others towards saluation, but hee that hath little grace, God shall haue little glory by him. Where God vouchsafeth the meanes of attaining to grace abundantly, God thereby expecteth that wee should grow strong and wealthy Christians.

But some man may say, they hope they be Gods children? but they cannot very well tell. There are a number of Christians that are so poore in grace, that if they had any lesse; they should haue none at all. If thou hast beene sicke, art thou content that thou art aliue, and canst onely crawle vp and downe thy chamber? No but thou wouldst faine be so strōg as thou maist goe abroad about thy
worke:

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worke, So likewise it wee haue got
ten a little wealth in our iouies, wee
should desire to become strongmen,
like Dauids worthies. But there
are many poore Christians who would
doe some good thing but they know
not how to goe about it. They haue a
little faith, and a little zeale. Now
if persecution should arise in the
Church these men would be ready to
runne away for all this. That being
so, let vs blow vp the fier of our zeale,
as a maide seruant in the morning fin-
ding but a little fire in the hearth,
doth put fit matter vnto it & cherish
it till it be much increased: So see-
ing the Lord giueth vs his word,
which is the meanes to kindle; to
cherish, and increase grace in vs, as
his word, Sacraments godly compa-
nie. &c. Let vs labour to blow vp
the fier of zeale and of godlinesse
which was languishing and decaying
in vs. Many a one that commeth to
a sermon being weake; becommeth
stronger

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stronger when he goeth from it. As ^{1. King. 19.}
Elias being fed from God walked in the 8.
strength thereof forty dayes. Let vs so
profite and increafe in knowledge and
in other graces of the spirit, that o-
thers also may be able to drinke of
our cup. But alacke, alacke, after
many yeares preaching the gospel,
there are many that haue fat bodies,
but leane soules. They are rich in
estate, but very poore in grace.

That are ready to dye.

Christians must labour to recouer
themselves being fallen, and to che-
rish the graces languishing in them,
for although they haue beene truely
called, euen these feeble ones, and
although wee grant they may also get
into heauen, yet surely it will be with
them, as it was with those that got
with a broken and crased vessell to the
hauen, but before they come there,
they shall vndergoe much shame, dis-
grace, sorrow, and griefe: whereas
the Barke that is strong sayleth with
C full

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full sayle merrily into the hauen :
and the strong couragious Christian
attaineth to more happinesse with
more ease. They can on their death
beds speake very cōfortably to their
friends about them, the other sort
cannot doe so. The strong and zealous
Christian shall pertake of greater
glory then the other. Now then
good languishing soule, that hast pro-
fessed the gospel twenty yeares, yea
forty, and yet the most thou canst
doe, or say, is, thou hopest to goe
to heauen. Fie for shame of this hope,
what hast thou yet no more strength
of faith and other graces? Oh this
vilde world, that hath eate vp all,
and maketh so many to neglect these
best things.

It followeth: *For I haue not found
thy workes perfect before mee.*

Considering the words, they be as
a reason to strengthen the former ex-
hortation, God looketh vpon thy
workes. As for our workes, if wee
haue

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haue no faith in vs, all that wee doe is abhominable, and if the workes wee doe, proceede from weakē faith, they are but lame. Now the workes of this Church heere spoken vnto, were not perfect, for they were but faint in truth. God said, this is the Law, doe this and liue. But now seeing we are eased of this yoke of the Law, shall we doe as wee list? Indeede if the Children of God do their best endeavour to please him, the Lord will accept of their works & seruice, and will pardon their imperfections & infirmities. But yet he cannot abide that men should do such imperfect works, as to serue him by halfes as some do, which will perhaps pray at Church, and whē they are abroadē, but not at home. They will pray at night, but not in the morning.

Not perfect before God:

If our works be not perfect, what doe we heere? If God doth not accept of our works there is then no comfort: If

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he doth then there is cōfort, & if wee
strive in our hearts to obey him, hee
will accept both of vs, & of our works.
But hee doth not accept of the service
of such men, as hearing of the word
of God, as soone as they are gone
out of the Church, fall to prating of
the world. Such mens workes how-
soever they seeme to be before men
yet are not perfect before God.

verse. 3.

*Remember therefore how thou hast re-
ceived and heard.*

Heere in this verse the Lord Je-
sus doth still goe on to shew them
that are cold and drowlie Christians
how to recover themselves. First, he
biddeth them remember how and
what they had heard and received;
inferring thereby, they had meerely
forgotten the same. From whence
wee may observe, that the forget-
ting of that which Gods word hath
taught vs, is oft times a chiefe cause of
our staggering and going backward
in religion and godlinesse. Examples
whereof

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whereof wee haue in Peter. who ha-
 uing forgotten what Christ had told
 him, did fall to that fearefull denyng
 of him. Also Dauid, who said, *He*
had washed or censed his heart in vaine,
&c. The Prophet had forgotten
 himseife, till he had entred againe into
 the Sanctuarie of the Lord. Ver. 17.
 Many hearers are like riuen dishes;
 which though th y heare much and
 often, they doe hold or receiue but
 litle. And why doe so many fall
 back to the world, is it because they
 neuer heard the word against it?
 No, but it is because they had forgot-
 ten that which they had heard. Be
 not (saith Iames) *forgetfull hearers*
of the word. Also the Apostle to the
 Hebrues saith, *Take heede least at a-*
ny time the word that you haue heard, bee
li: slippe, or runne out. Euen as A-
 qua-uiræ put into a cracke bottle, and
 is to be kept till one be sicke, the par-
 ty may dye for all this, if the Aquaui-
 ræ be run out at such time as he hath

Math. 26.
 70.
 Psal. 73.
 13.

Iam. 1. 25.
 Heb. 2. 1.

3000000

C 3

most

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1 Thes. 5.
21.

most neede of it. The Apostle Paule wilheth vs to try all things, and keepe that which is good, keepe it euer, as one would doe a peece of siluer, or gold, or precious lewell. Now that wee may the better keepe and retaine that wee haue heard out of Gods word, wee ought first to delight therein: For that which a man delighteth in, hee will alwaies be talking, and thinking of it: as the Huntsman will be talking of his sporte and game, and hee knoweth all the turnes of the Hare.

The second meanes to keepe that wee heare, is oftentimes to meditate thereon. Why doe yee remember tales that yee haue heard when yee were children? Because you haue told them ouer a great many times. And why doe many forget the Sermon they heard but yesterday? It is because they did not meditate, nor consider vppon it. Oh, saith one, it is because I haue an euill memorie. Nay friend, that will not goe for payment

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payment; this is but to blame God himselfe that he gaue thee no better memorie. Thou hast memory good enough for thy worldly busines etc. Besides, many a one doe rather destroy and hurt their memories by talking presently on the world after they haue heard the word, and so one peg doth driue out another. There is nothing which wee heare at a sermon but it may stand vs in stead at one time or other, either in aduersitie or in prosperitie; and one sermon well kept doth you more good, then ten that haue beene ill and negligently heard.

Hold fast, or recover thy selfe. Heere is another durtie for the drowlie and back-sliding Christians to performe, even by repentance to labour and recover themselves from their decaying estate; whereby we may consider what a great deal of worke many a man maketh for himselfe by reason of his siane. For having taken liberty

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to fall into any grosse sinne: as into worldlinesse, impatiencie, frowardnesse, and such like, he must repent of it. But by the practising of godlinesse there commeth no such worke of it. Particularly, what a great deale of worke did Dauid make for his two sinnes, Adultery and Murther. And so likewise Peter by denying his master, and a man would not haue the like sorrow, grieve and shame, for a kingdome. But of well doing, and faithfull seruing of the Lord, there is nothing but ioy and thankfulness that doth arise from the same. If men will take liberty to themselves to sin, and run out after their lusts, it will in the end cost them many teares, much shame and sorrow, but if it doth not make this worke in them, why then they haue made worke for the diuell himselfe to torment them. Many a Blasphemer and prophane wretch shalbe constrained in the end to cry out against themselves, to roare
and

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and to teare their hayre, and would
faine vomit vp their filthy sinnes, as
euer did Iudas desire to be ridd of the
thirty peeces of siluer which he had
taken of the Priests to betray his Maister.
Hold fast and repent.

Math. 27.
3.

It is an excellent thing to holdfast,
and to keepe our selues close vnto
God. Dauid prayed, saying, *Oh, be
mercifull vnto thy seruant, that I may
liue and keepe thy word.* It is the way
to keepe our selues from much sor-
row, afflictions, and other grieuous
trouble, to keepe close to the Lord,
and to keepe his word, otherwise it
wee straggle from him, wee shall
finde it to bee bitterness in the
end.

Psal. 119.
17.

Secondly, obserue that it is an ex-
cellent poynt of wisedome to take
heede by our former falls and back-
slidings. But there are many which
for want of care and circumspection
are very often ouertaken with one
and the selfe same sinne: And why

is

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is this? because they being recou-
red did not hold fast, neither had they
any resolute purpose quite to forsake
that sinne; not but Gods Children
may commit the same sinnes againe
which they had repented of. Yet
surely hauing once smarted for it, we
should learne to be more carefull euer
after to auoide it.

And repent.

Text.

Mat. 11. 21

This is an other cheife meanes of
their recovering themselves being
fallen either asleepe or decayed in
grace; that they should repent. It was
not so much said *we vnto thee Corazin*
for any sinne they had committed,
as for that they hauing the meanes
of conuersion offered them, did not
repent. So now though many doe
heare the word of God with ioy, yet
vntill the same hath drawne them to
repentance, all is in vaine. Our Prea-
ching and labour is in vaine, & their
hearing is in vaine, vnlesse (as before
is said) men be thereby brought to
faith

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faith and repentance, to become new creatures, and turned from all their sinnes. But happy are they that haue profited so far by the word preached, and till wee haue repented wee haue as yet done nothing to further our saluation. Dauid no doubt after committing of his two great sinnes (before mentioned) went to Church as hee did before, and did sacrifice, but yet he could haue no sound peace of conscience till he was rowled vp by *Nathan the Prophet*, and so brought vnto true repentance for those his great offences. After sinnes be committed, nothing doth make a mends, till we be penitent, and if grace be in vs, then shall we be forgiven.

2 Sam.

But if thou wilt not watch, I will come upon thee as a Theife; and thou shalt not know what hower, I will come upon thee.

In these words the Lord Iesus doth annex a threatning or comination to the former exhortation vnto watchfulness: so that you heare he vrgeth them

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to be watchfull, or else he will come upon them suddenly, and that to their cost.

This is a very necessary duty even to be watchfull over our wayes, and to be carefull that we be not overcome either by Satans temptations, or the worlds baits, thereby to be drawne either by action or speech to offend the maieſtie of God. And this watch must be let and kept euen from morning vntill night, as well when wee are in company, as when wee are alone, euen all the day long, and then at night wee should call to our selues to know how wee haue spent the day, and what hath beene done amisse therein by vs, and therevpon wee ought to pinch our hearts with griefe for those sinnes our conscience doth informe vs of, and to confesse to the Lord, and seeke reconciliation in Christ Iesus, and so to lye downe to our rest in peace.

The Lord Iesus saith three times
in

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in one Chapter, *watch.* And vnto Peter, James, and Iohn, *watch and pray least yee fall into temptation.* And the Apollle Peter bids vs be sober and watchfull in prayer.

Math. 24.

Math. 26.

41.

1: Pet. 4. 7.

Many doe know what it is to pray, but few how to vvatch. Let vs be carefull ouer our particular actions; and not onely in the grosse, but to haue an eye also to our lesser slippes and infirmities.

And although some will say, this is to imprison men and to binde their hands as it were behinde them. No, it is not so irkesome if we were once acquainted therewith: but it would be an excellent meanes to keepe and re-straine vs from committing of much sinne, and so from falling into much sorrow and greife. This is a peece of good counsell which I would further commend vnto you, if time would haue serued. Let vs then know this, that if we keepe Gods watch ouer our hearts, we shall find much comfort by it.

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I will come vpon thee as a theife &c.

This is an heauy threatning, to say, I will come vpo thee sodenly as a theife and vncexpected vpon such as be secure and carelesse, to take vengeance vpon them. This is to rowse them vp the more. We may consider that the Lord hath many voices: for sometime he speaketh to vs by his word, at other times by his Iudgements. In this Land many are quite dead, and many are drowfie: he hath spoken vnto vs many wayes, and he hath as many, or moe waies to come vpon vs with one Iudgement or other, and all iustly for our sinnes. Therefore let vs in time repent and be watchfull; least the Lord come shortly as a theife vpon vs, and take away our peace, yea, take away likewise this Candelticke, that is, the ministrie & preaching of the Gospell.

And indeede all this and more wee may feare may befall, and that ere it belong, for we haue seene him coming vpon vs in euerie yeare of late
by

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by smaller punishments, and of those wee haue made little vse hitherto, so that hereafter we may iustly feare he wil come vpon vs as a theife, that is, suddenly and we know a theife neuer comes but to doe hurt. And as this may befall our kingdome and state in generall, so to our selues, it is to be taken in perticular, God may come vpon vs suddenly, and take vs in our sinnes and in our securitie: The drow-sie Christian God will awake him by his corrections, and cast sorrow and shame vpon him Let euery one then be watchfull, least he be taken vnawares, and swept away with the common Iudgement which the Lord may send vpon this land for the Common and generall sinnes of the same.

Yet thou hast a few names in Sardie, which haue not defiled their garments &c.

Hitherto of the first part of the matter or substance of this Epistle; wherein he hath spoken to the worser sort of Christians; there first, rebuking them.

Secondly

verse 4.
Text.

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secondly, exhorting and threatning them in the second and third verses.

Now he speakes to them of the better sort in *Sardis*, euen to such as were neither dead nor drowlie as the former, and those he doth first commend for their integritie. Secondly, he doth promise them most excellent things, whereof the first is, *That they walke with him in white*, that is, partake with him in ioy & happinesse. The second, *for they are worthy*, that is, in the righteousness of Christ and not in their merits. *Thou hast a few names*. In these words obserue, that howsoever the greatest number of these professours were verie drowvie and dead hearted, yet they had some godly and zealous Christians among them, vvhich might haue beene as lights vnto the rest. And so he vwill haue some euer to shine in the vworld, such that the vworld may take example by them, or else be condemned by them, and left vvithout excuse. Examples vve haue hereof, first in

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in the old world, ther was a righteous *Noah*. In *Sodome*, there was a godly *Lot*: In *Achabs* time, though *Elias* thought he was left alone, yet the Lord said he had seauen thou and that did not follow *Baall*, but worshipped him. So no doubt the Lord hath some among vs that doe hold their owne, and such If we be such, happy are we; and such as be godly & zealous christians. doth the Lord accept. Even as one that hath a great harvest, and hath but few to helpe him in with it, yet working chearefully, they be very welcome to the owner of the field, so much the rather, because they be but fewe. So doth the Lord well esteeme of his cheareful seruants, though their name be but fewe. Againe, let other christians, if they see such as be forward, zealous & godly learne to imitate them, whether they be Preachers or other professors. If they doe not endeavour to follow them, then shall those fewe serue one day to condemne them, as

D

Noah

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Noah did the old world. But we see the world doth laugh, and deride at such as be zealous forward christians, as they goe by their doores to heare sermons, or else, for that they have prayer in their houses, are least accounted and most in contempt. But let those mockers knowe, that those others whom they despise, shall one day be brought forth to condemne them.

Secondly, obserue that Gods number is but few and small, and the multitude commonly follow the worst course. For when there was a voice to

Exod. 32.

be given, *whither the golden Calfe should be erected. yea or no;* the multitude consented to it. So when there was a question propounded, *whether the Lord Ie-*

Mat. 27. 21

sus or Barrabas the theife should be let goe from death, the multitude gaue

Ioseph. 2. 2

their voyce to let goe Barrabas. Israel was but a handfull of people in respect of other Nations, yet but a few of that handfull were saved. Though Israell

Isay. 10. 2

were as the sand in the sea. yet there should be

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be but a remnant saved. God hath but a few names, even in the world now at this time, for the greatest part thereof consists of *Idolators, Gentiles, Turks,* and *Jewes*, and as for the *Papists* they be iustly excluded for their Idolatry and superstition. And then amongst those which be called christians, they be but a few of them that be alive, that is, are sanctified. *Luke 12.* and believing persons. Christ his flocke is but small, as he saith in the said chapter verse 32. *feare not little flocke.* Most of those which be even christians in name doe goe *the broad way which leadeth to destruction*. Many finde the broad gate that leadeth to hell. Now if thou beest one of those that haue found the narrow way, and art *passing through the straight gate that leadeth to heaven and happines*, how then, what thankfulness dost thou owe vnto the Lord? But if thou beest as yet not truly called and converted, oh how greatly shouldst thou desire to tarayne

verse 32.

Mat. 7. 13.

verse 14.

Dz

vnto

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vnto it? The number of them that shall be saued is but small in respect of the other. For Christ is as it were di-
viding his owne auditors into foure partes, resembling his heires to foure kindes of groundes, he saith, there is but one sort that brings forth fruite to their owne comfort. Againe, he saith, *how hardly shall a rich man be saued.* Let vs pray that we may be of those small number that shall be saved. Yet if we looke vpon the course of the world, and consider what little paynes most men take to attayne vnto saluation, a man may thinke by the way were very easie & ready, but the world is herein deceiued. Labour to be in the number of those few that shall be saved. But if you shall tell some of their faults, they will answer, they doe no otherwise then their neighbours doe. Oh, but if thou wilt goe to heaven, thou must doe as the fewest and the smallest number doe, even as those fewe doe, so much despised.

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pised. If thou beest a Magistrate, thou must not so execute thy calling as most doe, but as the fewest do that be godly and faithfull indeed. So Ministers that will be saved, must not doe as the most doe in that function, whose courses are very lamentable for the most part, either not feeding their flocks at all, or negligently, or very scandalous in their liues. No, thou must boe as the fewest Ministers doe, even as those that are conscionable doe, and are painefull, and of a godly conversation, the like to fathers of families, and to other particular christians.

Christ saith, that in *Sardis* there were but a few names that should walke in white, yet his partake with him in glory, as they had done in holinesse. This might make many mens haires to stand vpright on their heads; considering Christs number euen among such as bee called Christians, is fewe. Yet I would to God that you which

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heare me this day might be saued. As
for those few names, or persons that
be godly and zealous, the world doth
account of them as a company of
fooles, and say, that they be but a few
Puritans. Now herein they doe grace
them very much to say they bee but
few : for so indeede the number of
Gods children be but small. Well see-
ing the way to heauen is so straight,
and the enemies of our soules bee so
strong and mighty, as namely Sathan,
the world, and our owne flesh : it is a
wonder that any are saued, and it is to
be attributed to Gods exceeding mer-
cy that any of vs escape and get to hea-
uen, hauing so many lets and hinde-
rances. But yet if a man did looke
from the Chancel to the Belfree, there
is not one but thinketh he shall be sa-
ued : but yet I tell thee, there must be
a struiing, if euer thou bee'st saued : &
lazier & drowsie Christians shal hard-
ly be saued. Men must take paines to
heare Gods word, and yet their parti-
cular

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cular callings in the world must not be neglected, so that the one needfull thing be principally followed.

Thirdly, obserue from these words, (*but a few names*) that God taketh particular note of the godly and zealous Christians by name, and one of them be better then an hundred drowsie Christians. Hee knoweth them by name, as he did *Noah* and *Lot*. *Before the destroyer went, the Lord caused them all to be marked on the forehead in Ierusalem that mourned for the iniquitie of the time.* Now good people labour to be vpright in heart: and though thou be neuer so poore, yet if thou art godly, the Lord surely hath a speciall care of thee, and hee will in the ende take thee vnto himselfe: therefore comfort thy selfe in this, that God and his holy Angels doe loue and respect thee.

Ezec. 9.4

What though the world and the prophane sort hate thee, scoffe and deride thee, thou needest not care for

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it. If a man bee loued and gratiouſly reſpected of the King and Nobles of the Court: what neede he care for the ſkullery in the kitchin, though they mocke and hate him? Euen ſo thou mayeſt account and eſteeme of theſe vngodly mockers of Gods children: though they weare a veluet coate, yet they are but as the ſkullians, and in baſe account before God.

That haue kept their garments from deſiling &c. In this the Lord commendeth theſe few godlie ones in *Sardis*, namely, for that they *had not deſiled their garments*, which indeede is a borrowed ſpeech. For heere is meant that either they had not spotted their ſoules with contagious finnes, or elſe ſtayned and blotted their profeſſion of the Goſpell by an vngodly conuerſation, and of this thing alſo we ought to be very wary and carefull to beme-
ring, or polluting of our garments.
We know, we are to blame yong children, if they deſile their new clothes.

I et

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Let not vs then which professe the Gospell, and thereby to be the children of God: let vs not I say, staine and blot our holy profession by a wicked conuersation. But alack, alack, there be many who though they haue some goodnesse in them, and haue receiued some graces from God, yet now and then defile their garmen t: few walke as *Zacharie* did, iustly, without reproofe. Many heereby giue occasion to the profane to speake euill of the profession of the gospell. But let vs consider this, God hath giuen vs new garments which wee should not defile. If a man had the Kings liuery, he would keepe it well and cleane, if it were but for the Kings sake that gaue it vnto him. It cannot be denied, but that a true christian his garments may (as it were) catch lint; that is be soyled with some infirmity, but let vs take heede that our garmets be not defiled, that is, our profession stained with grosse sinnes, as Pride,
World-

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Worldlineffe, Impudencie, and such like. It is a comely thing as can be seene on Gods earth, to see a Christian walke answerably to his calling. I graunt that many haue slanderous reports raised against them, but yet let vs be carefull to giue no iust offence, or occasion to the wicked to reproach our profession; and to say, loe such a one for ail his profession, he is as much giuen to the world as others, or bringeth vp his children as proudly as others.

And they shall walke with him in white, for they are worthy.

Heere now he commeth to make an excellent promise to sincere and good Christians, whom before he had commended, which is this, *that they shall walke with him*, that is, liue with Christ Iesus in ioy and happinesse heereafter, which is to be vnderstoode by this borrowed speech of *walking with him in white*: a fit promise to those which in their life time had care to keepe
their

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their garments from defiling. Such as walke after Christ in holinesse, shall walke with him in glory and happinesse. This is an excellent promise to them which hold out to the end, and an argument to encourage vs vnto this chearefull keeping our garments cleane in this life, though it be somewhat painefull and troublesome. Who will not be content to indure some crosses & take some paines heere to liue godly? Seeing such may be assured they shall one day raigne with Christ in glory. Let not all the profits of the world, or flesh, or diuell, make vs loose our white garments in heauen, that is, eternall glory, holines, & happinesse with Iesus Christ, there wee shall be paid for all our paines.

As for those which are vngodly, they shall not vvalke in white, but in blacke, yea, they shall goe to the blacknesse of darknesse, for that they liued heere to commit the workes of darknesse: they shall partake of the tormēt's
he

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in the lake of vtter darkenesse, where shall be weeping for euer; where as they on the other side are blessed, that hauing cleane garimēts doe make conscience to keepe them cleane still, such shall be sure that their labour shall not be in vaine in the Lord. But let not lazie Christians thinke to haue the like portion of eternall ioy and happinesse, as the other sort that be zealous Christiansas, before said. And as for such as are wholly giuen to walke after their lusts, they shall not walke with Christ in white, but with the diuell in darkenesse and torment.

For they are worthy. This worthinesse is in regard that they are cloathed with the righteoulnes of Christ Iesus. But as for the Papists, heere is nothing that will make for their meriting by workes, for no workes can merit, vnlesse, first they be our owne, secondly, they must be perfect in themselues. Indeede the wicked they shall haue torments giuen them, *so they are worthy,*

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thy, because their workes are perfectly wicked. As for the godly their worthines is onely in regard of Christ his righteousnesse. There be many poore afflicted Christiāns which thinke they be not worthy to walke vpon the ground, yet indeede they are worthy of greater things, because they are ioyned vnto Christ, and accepted in, and for him. As for the former five sorts of dead ones, they are worthy of all paines and plagues: yet there is a way for them also to bee freed from that their estate, and to become partakers of mercy: for if either thou art ignorant, or a liuer still in some grosse sin, or a worldling, or but a meere ciuill person, or an Hyppocrite, canst yet bewaile thy sinnes, loath them, and craue pardon for them in Christ, & by faith apprehend his righteousnesse, then thou maiest bee saued. But if the ciuill man, or any other stand vpon his own righteousnesse, then wilt thou be confounded: for such can no more stand be-

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before the flaming fire. Oh, that many men had grace to see into their vildenesse, and how wretched they are, if they be not cloathed with Christs righteousnesse.

First obserue, if Gods children be counted worthy of heauen, what then shall become of this vilde world? that doe iustle Gods children vp in corners or against the wals, and hate & scorne them? *A good man loueth them that feare the Lord, but in the wicked, vilde persons are most regarded, and the godly despised.* Such men are of Caine his mind that *hated his brother*, or of Chams minde that *mocked his father.* *Gen. 9.* 22. or of Michol her minde that *scoffed her husband Dauid for his zeale.* Oh say some, these hypocriticall Puritans are worse then the Papists. Indeed this great and common sinne of this land seemeth not as yet to bee reuenged, but no doubt it wil be ere it bee long with some vniuersall iudgement: for now euen the basest seruant, and vildest

Psal. 115. 3.

Gen. 4. 8.

2 Sam. 6. 10.

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vildest Ruffian can mocke and scoffe at those that are professors and zealous Christians. But such doe carry euen the marke of the malignant Church. I would neuer with a worser signe of a wicked man, then to bee a mocker of professors and of Gods children. The Apostle *Iohn* saith, *Hee that loueth him that doeth beget, loueth them also that are begotten of him.* Take, heede of crossing the Lord in mocking those vpon whom he bestoweth his owne image. For *if they shall bee cursed that did not feede and cloath such as beleueed in Christ,* what shall become of those which mocke and persecute them? They shall in the day of iudgment stand quaking & knocking their knees together like *Belthazar*. Oh nay more, they shall desire that the hilles might fall and couer them; and hide them from the presence of the iudge. These men doe take a very heauy peece of worke in hand, that doe so deride the godly. *Saul, Saul, why dost thou*

1 Ioh. 5.1.

*Mat. 25.41.
42. & 43.*

Dan 5.6.

Act. 9.4.

The glory and happines

Act 9, 4

shou persecuteme? I neuer knew but that without speedy repentance the iudgements of God did take hold on such persons euen in this life, if not, then after this life they shal haue their reward.

Well then, let vs make some repetition of that which hath beene spoken. Yee haue heard of three sortts of Christians: whereof one sort are starke dead, as the ignorant person, one liuing and louing any one sinne, worldling, ciuill person, Hyppocrite: these are to desire the Lord that they may come out of their graues.

The second sort were renewed, but yet lazie Chriltians: let these consider how God hath and doeth often times crosse them, to make them leaue their worldlinesse, coldnesse, and securitie. As for the world let them leaue it in affection, and let those studie and looke wholly after it, which haue and can looke for no other portion but in this world. And I am afraide if sicknesse

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nesse or death should suddenly take these drowisie christians; it would take them euen as a thiefe vnlooked for: whereas the godly zealous Christian that hath his loynes girt vp, and is waiting for his maisters comming, and watchfull like the *wise Virgins*, he hath but one daies sins to reckon for. When death comes he can bid him welcome, and say, I looked for you before this day: He is not to seeke for his oyle to put in his lampe, at that time as were the foolish virgins spoken of in the parable. Now for the third sort of Christians which indeed be aliue, and haue kept their garments cleane and vndefiled: to them wee say, let them that are righteous, bee righteous still, such shall walke with the Lord Iesus hereafter in white, that is, in perfect glory and felicitie: whereas the vngodly shall walke with the diuell in blacke torments. God grant we may with *Mary* choose the better part, which shall neuer be taken away from vs.

Mat. 25.4

FINIS.